

Message Text

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ACTION AGR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4967

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SUBJECT: AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ALGERIA

REF: (A) STATE 157767, (B) ALGIERS 1898

1. AMBASSADOR, DR. FAUGHT OF USDA AND COMOFF MCARTHUR MET MORNING AUGUST 3 WITH SEC GEN BOUKLI AND, BRIEFLY, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE LARBI TAYEBI.

2. AMBASSADOR BEGAN SUBSTANTIVE PORTION OF MEETING BY SUMMARIZING CONTENTS REF A, EMPHASIZING THAT (A) CONCERNED USG DEPTS AGREE U.S. PARTICIPATION IN ALGERIAN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT DESIRABLE; (B) WE BELIEVE MORE DETAILS AND BETTER PICTURE RE GOA DESIRES ARE NECESSARY, AND (C) WE ARE CONCERNED THAT GOA EXPECTATIONS MIGHT EXCEED OUR CAPABILITIES, SINCE USG ROLE MUST OF NECESSITY BE LIMITED. RE LATTER POINT, AMBAASSADOR SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM EXIM OR OTHER OFFICIAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION OUT OF THE QUESTION. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT WE COULD ATTEMPT ASSIST IN FINDING PRIVATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. FINALLY, AMBASSADOR SAID THAT IN ORDER BETTER ASSESS DIMENSIONS PROPOSED PROJECT, WE PREPARED SEND SMALL SURVEY TEAM TO ALGERIA FOR DISCUSSIONS IN FURTHER DETAIL.

3. DR. FAUGHT TOLD BOUKLI THAT WE ENVISAGED TEAM AS CONSISTING OF THREE TO FIVE PERSONS, PROBABLY TWO FROM USG PLUS REPRESENTATIVE OR REPRESENTATIVES FROM U.S. PRIVATE SECTOR. HE SAID TEAM COULD COME OUT

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PROBABLY WITHIN ONE OR TWO MONTHS. BOUKLI REPLIED THAT

THIS APPEARED TO HIM TO BE PROPER WAY PROCEED. HE SAID HE WOULD HOPE TEAM COULD TALK WITH RESPONSIBLE GOA OFFICIALS, SEE WHAT STUDIES AND DATA ARE OR ARE NOT AVAILABLE, PERHAPS VISIT SOME OF THE AREAS IN QUESTION, THEN PREPARE A BROAD OUTLINE OF WHAT IS REQUIRED, INCLUDING A ROUGH ESTIMATE OF COST. BOUKLI EMPHASIZED THAT THEY NOT CONCERNED ONLY WITH AGRICULTURAL ASPECTS; THEY INTERESTED IN FULL, INTEGRATED PROGRAM, INCLUDING, BUT NOT NECESARILY LIMITED TO, INITIAL STUDIES, PROJECT DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, BOTH SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL, CONCLUDING WITH A FINISHED OR PROCESSED PRODUCT. HE WOULD HOPE INITIAL TEAM COULD PRODUCE BASIC BLUEPRINT FOR PROCEEDING TO THIS END.

4. DR. FAUGHT SAID THIS MORE COMPREHENSIVE AND DETAILED THAN WE HAD IN MIND, BUT HE THOUGHT IT STILL COULD BE DONE. HE SAID TEAM PROBABLY WOULD HAVE TO BE EXPANDED TO FIVE OR SIX PERSONS, AND ARRIVAL TIME PROBABLY WOULD BE DELAYED SLIGHTLY. SUCH A SURVEY WOULD TAKE ABOUT THREE WEEKS, HE ESTIMATED. BOUKLI, IN CONSULTATION WITH MINISTER, SAID SOMETIME IN OCTOBER WOULD BE BEST TIME FOR TEAM VISIT. THAT WOULD BE WELL AFTER RAMADAN AND WOULD BE BEST WEATHER FOR TRAVELING INTO INTERIOR.

5. AMBASSADOR THANKED MINISTER AND BOUKLI AND SAID WOULD FORWARD RESULTS THIS CONVERSATION TO WASHINGTON. BOUKLI PROMISED HAVE INITIAL WORKING PAPERS FOR TEAM DRAWN UP, INCLUDING INVENTORY OF STUDIES ALREADY AVAILABLE, SO AS FACILITATE TEAM'S WORK.

6. COMMENT: EMBASSY STILL NOT SANGUINE THAT EXPECTATIONS, ESPECIALLY THOSE OF MINISTER, DO NOT EXCEED OUR CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE. WE NOT OVERLY CONCERNED IN THIS REGARD, HOWEVER, SINCE TEAM VISIT CAN DEFINE WHAT WE CAN AND CANNOT DO. MINISTER HAS GRAND PLAN IN MIND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OVER TIME SPAN OF "GENERATIONS," AND PORTIONS WE NOW DISCUSSING ARE ONLY PART OF THAT PLAN. BOTH HE AND BOUKLI EMPHASIZED THEY INTEND DOOR BE LEFT OPEN FOR DISCUSSION OTHER POSSIBILITIES IN AG FIELD.

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7. MINISTER ALSO SAID HE HOPES TEAM VISIT WILL BE FOLLOWED BY VISIT OF BOUKLI TO U.S. FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS, FOLLOWED PERHAPS BY HIS, THE MINISTER'S, VISITING U.S. IN SPRING (SEE SEPTTEL).

8. BOUKLI NOW APPEARS UNDERSTAND FINANCING REALITIES. THIS DID NOT RPT NOT APPEAR TO BOTHER HIM. WE NOT ENTIRELY SURE THAT MINISTER UNDERSTANDS THIS ASEPECT.

9. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS WE PROCEED WITH TEAM VISIT,
EXPANDED BOTH IN SIZE AND SCOPE. IT OBVIOUS THAT
GRANDOISE SCHEME IN MINISTER'S MIND NOT RPT NOT
REALISTIC UNDER CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT THIS SHOULD
NOT PREVENT US FROM PROCEEDING ON STEP-BY-STEP
BASIS ASSIST WITH HELPING DEFINE WHAT IS DESIRABLE
AND FEASIBLE TODAY, THUS POSITONING OURSELVES TO BOTH
ASSIST IN AND BENEFIT FROM WHAT MIGHT BE IMPLEMENTED
TOMORROW. ALGERIANS OBVIOUSLY ARE GOING TO SPEND
GOOD DEAL ON AGRICULTURE, AND WE THINK THERE IS
SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL MARKET HERE FOR AMERICAN AGRIBUSINESS
TECHNOLOGY. TEAM VISIT, PROPERLY DONE, SHOULD HELP
OPEN DOOR.PARKER

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